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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-19.

Please add the following new claims:

20. (former claim 1) An isolated polynucleotide native to the genus *Corynebacterium*, which is at least 90% identical to ~~a polynucleotide which comprises~~ SEQ ID NO:1, wherein the polynucleotide encodes a protein having the activity of a histidine kinase.

21. (former claim 1) An isolated polynucleotide native to the genus *Corynebacterium*, which is at least 95% identical to ~~a polynucleotide which comprises~~ SEQ ID NO:1, wherein the polynucleotide encodes a protein having the activity of a histidine kinase.

22. The isolated polynucleotide of claims 20 or 21, wherein said polynucleotide is native to the species *Corynebacterium glutamicum*.

23. (former claim 6) An isolated polynucleotide encoding a protein comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, ~~wherein said protein has the activity of a histidine kinase.~~

24. (former claim 2) The polynucleotide of claim 23, wherein said polynucleotide is a DNA.

25. (former claim 3) The polynucleotide of claim 23, wherein said polynucleotide is a RNA.

26. An isolated polynucleotide comprising SEQ ID NO:1 nucleotides 342 to 1610.

27. An isolated polynucleotide comprising SEQ ID NO:1.

28. An isolated polynucleotide consisting of SEQ ID NO:1 or a fragment thereof encoding a protein having the activity of a histidine kinase.

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29. (former claim 1c) An isolated polynucleotide comprising the full complement of SEQ ID NO:1.

30. (former claim 4 iii) An isolated polynucleotide which hybridizes under stringent conditions to SEQ ID NO:1 or the full complement thereof, wherein said stringent conditions comprise washing in 5XSSC at a temperature from 50 to 68°C and wherein said polynucleotide encodes a protein having the activity of a histidine kinase.

31. The isolated polynucleotide of claim 30, wherein said polynucleotide is native to the genus *Corynebacterium*.

32. The isolated polynucleotide of claim 30, wherein said polynucleotide is native to the species *Corynebacterium glutamicum*.

33. (former claim 7) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claims 20 or 21.

34. (former claim 7) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claims 23, 26, 27, 28 or 29.

35. (former claim 7) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of claim 30.

36. (former claim 8) A bacterium comprising the vector of claims 33, 34, or 35.

37. The bacterium of claim 36, wherein said bacterium is of the species *Escherichia coli* or of the genus *Corynebacterium*.

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38. (former claim 1d) An isolated polynucleotide consisting of at least 30 consecutive nucleotides selected from the full complement of SEQ ID NO:1, wherein said polynucleotide is a probe in a hybridization reaction to detect ^{and} or to isolate a polynucleotide encoding a protein having the activity of a histidine kinase.

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39. (former claim 1d) An isolated polynucleotide consisting of at least 30 consecutive nucleotides selected from SEQ ID NO:1 or the full complement thereof, wherein said polynucleotide is a primer in a polymerase chain reaction to produce a polynucleotide encoding a protein having the activity of a histidine kinase.